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find it applied, with great elegance, to the demonstration of all the principles of dynamics, to the figures and motions of the planetary bodies, satellites, and comets, and to the effects of their mutual attractions. The theorems and principles contained in this work have been explained by Laplace, in as popular a manner as the nature of the subject would admit, in his *Exposition du Système du Monde*, which has gone through five editions, with numerous improvements. Whoever will make himself master of these works, will have no need to seek in other sources for anything relative to the principles of physical astronomy, or the application of those principles to the system of the world.

ART. V.—*Letters on the Gospels.* By MISS HANNAH ADAMS.
18mo. pp. 216. Cambridge. Hilliard & Metcalf. 1824.

THE author of these letters has long been known to the public, as a successful writer on theological subjects, and as having rendered essential service to religion, by the productions of her pen. Her *Views of Religions*, or, as she denominates it in the last edition, her *Dictionary of all Religions and Religious Denominations*, has been a popular work from the time of its first publication. It has passed through four editions, the last of which is enlarged and greatly improved. It was published in England, with a preface and additions, by Mr Andrew Fuller ; and also in another form by Mr Thomas Williams, who likewise made alterations. To both these editors, Miss Adams acknowledges herself indebted, for some of the improvements of her fourth edition. This work is the best manual with which we are acquainted, for giving information respecting the religious views now entertained by Christians, and such as have prevailed in different ages, since the origin of Christianity. It has the peculiar merit of the strictest candor and impartiality ; and so completely has the author divested herself of all individual prepossessions, that it may be doubted whether, from a single passage in the whole work, her own religious sentiments can be inferred. This freedom from personal bias, in exhibiting the views of others, especially on topics rarely touched without calling out private opinion, in-

spires confidence in her statements, as well as respect for her judgment and christian charity.

The public is also indebted to Miss Adams for a *History of the Jews, from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Nineteenth Century*. This is a judicious and well arranged compilation from the best authors, and brings to the knowledge of the reader, all the important incidents in the history of that remarkable people, from the destruction of their city, down to recent times. It speaks of the persecution suffered by the Jews, their religious ceremonies and tenets, their various conditions as a people, and their steadfastness in adhering, under every vicissitude of fortune, to their national peculiarities.

Miss Adams's *Summary History of New England* has been commended for its accuracy, and the perspicuity of its style.

The reputation, which she has acquired by the above works, will not suffer by her *Letters on the Gospels*. She professes to have written them for the improvement of the young, and to this end they are exceedingly well adapted. Every one knows, that throughout the writings of the Evangelists, perpetual allusions are made to the customs of the times, local circumstances, the religion of the Jews, and habits of thinking peculiar to the age; and that, without a knowledge of these particulars, the meaning of Scripture is, in many parts, obscure and uncertain. Had facts of this sort always been sought out and carefully studied, by those who have undertaken to interpret the Scriptures, the world might have been spared a thousand absurdities, which have gone abroad in the garb of commentaries and annotations, and the substance of religion might have been profited by the labor and ingenuity, that have been wasted on its unreal forms. In her first letter, Miss Adams has the following just remarks; 'While attentively perusing the New Testament, always bear in mind that the Gospel was first preached to the Jews, in Judea, and that the Evangelists and Apostles, with the exception, perhaps, of St Luke, were all of the Hebrew nation. Much of the peculiar beauty of the inspired writings cannot be perceived, unless the history, condition, and character of the Jews have become objects of your attention, not only during the period of the Mosaic dispensation, as recorded in the Old Testa-

ment, but at the time of our Lord's appearance. It is also important to understand the frequent allusions in the New Testament to their opinions, habits, manners, and ceremonies. A view of the darkness and depravity which prevailed in the world, both among the Jews and Gentiles, at the period when our Saviour appeared upon earth, will enable you to appreciate more justly the divine excellence of the christian dispensation.' To supply the means for making these acquisitions, and arriving at a clear understanding of the New Testament, is the special purpose of the author.

She begins with a general description of the state of the world, at the time our Saviour appeared, in regard to the government, learning, philosophy, superstitions, and objects of worship among the Gentile nations; and also the civil and religious condition of the Jews, the sects and parties into which they were divided, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and those whose opinions were tinged with the Oriental philosophy. She next proceeds to a short geographical sketch of the Holy Land, and of the principal cities, villages, mountains, and other places, that are made famous in the history of our Lord. This is followed by a brief history of Jerusalem since that time. Several letters are then devoted to the discourses of our Saviour, in which the numerous allusions to the opinions and habits of the Jews are pointed out, and aptly explained. This part is highly interesting, and is calculated to lend important aids to the young student of the Gospels, as well as to instruct the more practised reader of the Scriptures, who has not turned his thoughts to these subjects. The miracles next come under notice. This head might have been enlarged upon to advantage, but as far as the author goes she speaks to the purpose, and throws light on several texts of Scripture. The parables engage more of her attention, and she explains in a very happy manner, and by numerous illustrations, this beautiful mode of conveying instruction, so successfully practised by our Saviour. Some of the more important parables, such as those of the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the rich man, the marriage supper, and the pharisee and publican, are separately considered, and the meaning of their particular parts deduced from the circumstances under which they were delivered. A series of miscellaneous letters embraces an account of

the funeral rites of the Jews, the character of Herod and of Pilate, the prophecies of our Lord, and the forms of salutation in the East. The whole is concluded with a body of questions, adapted to the leading topics of each letter, and designed for the use of instructors in examining the progress of their pupils, or to refresh the reader's own recollection.

Such is an imperfect outline of this little volume. It will be seen, that its subjects are important ; they are treated in so direct and familiar a manner, as to be brought down to the entire comprehension of every mind. Considering the cheapness of the volume, the agreeable manner in which it is written, and the numerous illustrations of Scripture which it contains, it may safely be recommended as claiming a place in the library of every family, where there are young minds to be instructed, and older ones that love to read the Scriptures with a clear sense of their meaning and force.

In this place we are tempted to add a few words on a point, which the perusal of these letters has brought strongly to mind. It is the argument, which the success of the christian religion at its origin affords in favor of its divinity and truth ; not that there is anything new in this argument, but that the examination of the topics above enumerated presents it in an imposing light.

The success of the christian religion, in the first age of its growth, becomes a matter of surprise, when we look at the *obstacles* with which it had to contend, the *means* by which these obstacles were encountered, and the *fact* that these means were effectual.

As to the *obstacles*, which opposed the introduction of christianity, they were formidable beyond what can now easily be imagined. They existed in the customs, opinions, prejudices, and perverseness of the Jews, to whom it was first preached, and in the spiritual darkness, and moral degradation of the Gentiles. The Jews had early received the books of Moses as of divine authority, and the writings of the Prophets were considered no less the word of God. It is certain, that the descendants of Abraham separated themselves at a very early period from the rest of the world, were governed by laws essentially different from other nations, and became distinguished by modes of life, and habits of thinking, feeling, and acting, peculiar to themselves. The demon-

strations, which they had perpetually before them, of being under the special guidance of the Supreme Being, quickened their pride, caused them to magnify their privileges, and to fancy themselves superior to other nations. From numerous intimations in their prophetical writings, they had long expected the coming of the Messiah. In him they were looking for a prince, a judge, a redeemer, a deliverer; but it was from their political troubles, and their distresses as a nation, from which they fondly imagined he would deliver them. When Christ appeared, they had become a degraded province, and were suffering under the cruel tyranny of the Romans.

Such was the political condition of the Jews, such their national prejudices, and such their expectations in regard to the character of the Messiah, and the objects of his mission. These were powerful obstacles to the introduction of a religion, like that of Jesus Christ. How would the people believe *him* to be their long expected Messiah, whose character and conduct were so opposite to all their anticipations? Instead of coming in the splendor and power of a prince, he appeared an humble peasant of Gallilee, a province proverbial for its poverty and insignificance, and from which it had long been the belief, that no good thing could come. He did nothing to promote their political aggrandisement; he placed before them no prospects of military glory and conquest; and instead of offering to rescue them from bondage, he chided them for their rebellious spirit, and commanded them to submit to their condition.

And further, the religious impressions of the Jews presented another obstacle. They believed their religion to come immediately from God. With them, civil and religious laws were the same. Their national concerns, their religious ceremonies, and the occupations of private life, were regulated by the same rules. The *religion* of the Jews mingled with all their intercourse, and gave a tone to their thoughts, their habits, their manners. In this consisted the whole compass of their education. It was an entire system of law and morality, of faith and piety. No Jew had any conception, that it could be improved or altered. It was the glory of his nation, the foundation of its present existence, and the hope of its future greatness and prosperity. With these im-

pressions, nothing could be more remote from the minds and feelings of the Jews, than that any change was either necessary or possible in their religion.

But these are a part only of the obstacles, with which the christian religion had to contend. It was, also, to be preached to the Gentiles. And what was there in its character to recommend it to them? Or rather, what was there, which was not at war with all their prejudices, prepossessions, and religious ceremonies? In the first place, the Jewish nation itself had become a byeword to the rest of the world. Their customs, and the exclusive nature of their laws, had raised barriers between them and every other nation. The contempt, with which they affected to regard their neighbors, was returned in full measure. Next, the character, which Christ sustained while on earth, was not one, which would command the respect of the Gentiles any more than the Jews. How could they believe the divine nature and authority of his doctrines, when they had no knowledge of the God of Israel, by whose power he acted, and by whose spirit he was enlightened? Confirmed in a mythology and worship of their own, which were rendered sacred by the most cherished associations, and all that was dear to them in the memory of their ancestors, how could they believe, that a Jew of Nazareth had been sent from heaven to proclaim a system of divine truths, that should overthrow, and root up the system, which they regarded with so much veneration; and that should work an entire revolution in the morals, manners, and religion of the world?

Again, the manner in which Christ died was calculated to excite abhorrence in the minds, both of the Jews and the heathens, or Gentiles. The death of the cross was one, to which only the worst of criminals were condemned. No doctrine could have been proposed to the people, at which they would so suddenly revolt, and which they would so immediately reject, as the doctrine of the cross. And yet, this doctrine was a prominent feature in the preaching of the Apostles. No doctrine could be more unpopular, or do greater violence to the prejudices of all parties, the high and low, the wise and ignorant, yet the Apostles persevered in preaching it; they resorted to no schemes of compromise; they maintained a stern integrity, and firm adherence to truth,

without yielding to the vices, the follies, or the weaknesses of men. They preached the Gospel, as it had been delivered to them by their divine master, leaving it to find its own way into the heart and the understanding, without attempting to remove or diminish the vast obstacles, which stood like the mountains of ages to oppose its progress.

It may be added, also, that the moral character and the purifying spirit of the christian religion, its precepts and commands, were totally at variance with the morals and manners of the whole world at that period ; so that the religion of Jesus had not only to contend with the prejudices, the firmly rooted opinions, and the hereditary customs of all nations ; but also their passions, their vices, their inclinations, their worldly propensities, and worldly affections.

Considering the formidable obstacles, at which we have but partially hinted, what *means* should we expect would overcome them ? Should we look for anything less, than the highest efforts of human wisdom and learning in the persons, who should attempt to remove the prejudices, and correct the vices of a world sunk in depravity and darkened with error ? Should we not even then say, that success would be wholly beyond the reach of human probability ? But what was the fact ? A few obscure, uneducated men, who had no knowledge of the world, without patronage or aid, without any countenance from the wise, or strength from the powerful, set out to accomplish a revolution greater than ever had been contemplated, by the most enthusiastic and fortunate conqueror,—a revolution, which had for its object, not the downfall of nations and the glory of conquest, but the peace, harmony, virtue, and happiness of the whole human race. The preachers of Christianity, to all human appearance, were absolutely the last men, who could be supposed qualified for so extraordinary an enterprise.

And what kind of people did these preachers go abroad to convince and convert ? The age was not more remarkable for error, superstition, and wickedness, than for intellectual refinement. It was a proud era of the arts and sciences in Greece, and the meridian glory of Roman greatness. Philosophy had taught men to reason and think ; eloquence and poetry to invent, define, and adorn. The Apostles, unlettered, uninformed as they were, came resolutely forward to combat

learning, ingenuity, wit, eloquence. Imagine to yourself a small band of fishermen from Genesareth, going into the cities of Greece, reasoning with their wise men, confuting their arguments, and drawing after them multitudes of followers, adherents to a cause, which was held in universal contempt, and which subjected every person, who embraced it, to privations, reproach, and sufferings. Imagine these men in the synagogues of the Jews, reasoning with the learned doctors on the most difficult points of the law, and proving the truth of their doctrines from the very arguments brought to confute them. Imagine St Paul, who tells us he was rude in speech, and weak in bodily presence, imagine this man standing before a powerful king, and uttering his sentiments in a strain of bold, nervous, manly eloquence, which made the heathen monarch himself exclaim, ‘Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.’ Imagine him in the enlightened city of Athens, boldly chiding the Athenians for their idolatry, and their superstition, preaching Jesus and the resurrection, and making known the existence, attributes, and glory of the one true God. By what power did Paul and Barnabas preach and teach in Lystra, till the people exclaimed, ‘The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men?’ By what magic did these Apostles, uninformed and unpractised in the arts of the world, impress with conviction and fill with astonishment the minds not only of the ignorant and simple, but of the learned, the wise, the powerful? What sufferings did they not endure? Imprisoned, scourged, and stoned; reviled and mocked; persecuted and despised, what influence could we expect they would have, in preaching the unwelcome doctrines of the cross, convincing the world of error, conquering the omnipotence of opinion, subduing the pride of knowledge and wisdom, destroying the dominion of prejudice, and in severing the unhallowed union of religion and vice, of unprincipled ambition and morals, of devotion and debasing ceremonies?

But they succeeded; prejudice and pride yielded before them; the ignorant were enlightened, and the obstinate convinced; and the religion of Jesus rapidly spread itself throughout the whole civilised world. The Apostles themselves travelled over many parts of Asia and Africa, and to the remote regions of Europe. One generation had not

passed away, before churches were established in all the land of the patriarchs, in Greece, Italy, Egypt, and the far distant countries of Ethiopia; and this, by the means we have been considering. The spirit of persecution breathed its venom; the arm of tyranny was raised in anger, and the followers of Jesus were led to martyrdom. They triumphed in their fate, and gloriously tested the strength of their faith, the firmness of their principles, and the joyful hopes of their religion, by a sacrifice of their lives. And notwithstanding these appalling obstacles, this religion advanced with a celerity altogether beyond any anticipations, which could have been warranted by the most fortunate circumstances. Had it been sanctioned by the belief, and supported by the edicts of princes and governors; had it been promulgated by preachers of the highest worldly wisdom and attainments; had it flattered the vanity and encouraged the vices of men; had it appealed to their passions, their interests, their feelings; even then, the broadest latitude of human probability could never have encouraged the hope, that its success would be so rapid, extensive, and permanent.

What then shall we say, when we compare the obstacles, the means, and the results? Is nothing but the power of man here? Since the foundation of the world, when has the power of man been adequate to such effects? It was a remark of one of the ancient fathers, who lived fifteen hundred years ago, to the unbelievers of his time; ‘If ye will not believe the miracles of the Apostles, ye must at least believe this miracle, that the world was by such instruments, without miracles, converted.’ In his opinion it was not a less wonderful, and in itself, a less incredible fact, that the Gospel should succeed as it did, than that the Apostles should work the miracles recorded in their writings. Without referring to a supernatural agency, one is comparatively as unaccountable as the other. But the fact of the success of the Gospel is before our eyes. It is confirmed by authentic historical records. The experience of every age has given additional proof; and one simple question remains. How is it to be accounted for? To this question there is but one answer, and it is short. What the Evangelists wrote was true; Christ was the ‘power of God and the wisdom of God;’ his religion was from Heaven, and the Apostles published it

to the world as they were instructed by him, and assisted by the Holy Spirit of the Most High. The religion of Jesus has gone forth to every quarter of the globe, taking up its abode especially in the most enlightened and civilised countries, where its claims could be examined, and its excellence estimated. It has made reason its champion, and enlisted the affections on its side. It has become triumphant by the mild and persuasive influence of its doctrines; its support is in the convictions and consciences of men. Where has it prevailed, and has not carried light to the ignorant, consolation to the afflicted, and hope to the desponding? If such a religion be not true, well may we exclaim, with the astonished and inquiring Roman, *What is truth?*

ART. VI.—*Pulaski Vindicated from an Unsupported Charge, inconsiderately or malignantly introduced in Judge Johnson's Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Major General Nathaniel Greene.* 8vo. pp. 37. Baltimore, 1824.

THE dismemberment of Poland, effected by the perfidy and ambition of three despotic powers, has ever been regarded, by the friends of liberty and justice, with the utmost indignation and abhorrence. It was a deed of infamy, which can find no parallel in history, and which, under any of the forms of civil society, would be looked upon as a crime, that could only be expiated by the severest penalties of violated law. The government of Poland, it is true, had grown weak by factions, and was sunk under the burthen of its ill organised constitution. It had once been the pride of the Poles to rally round the standard of what was called, and what in reality was in some of its features, a republican system. The privilege of election, that great palladium of political right, was enjoyed to a considerable extent, and for a time afforded a salutary check to absolute tyranny in the rulers. In the best periods of its administration, however, the Polish government was composed of strangely mixed and discordant elements. The King was elected, but the authority conferred by the crown was almost nothing; the Diet, or legislative